



## Security Challenges and Control Measure in Four Academic Libraries in North East Nigeria University Libraries

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the security challenges and control measure in four (4) academic libraries in North East Nigeria University libraries. Four universities libraries in North East Nigeria were used as case studies. The respondents constitutes librarians, library officers and library assistants drawn from the four institutions. The aim of the study was to identify the causes of book thefts and mutilation in university libraries and how to curb and preserve the continuous use of these information resources in the library. Survey research method was employed. Questionnaires are the main instrument for data collection. Frequency, tables, percentages is the main statistical tools used for data analysis. Results from the study revealed that absence of the use of technology in securing the safety of library materials were not found in some of the surveyed libraries. However finding revealed that both print and electronic materials are targets of crime in libraries, with non-return of library materials, theft and mutilation constituting serious security challenges in these libraries. It was also discovered that various methods were adopted for stealing and mutilation of library materials which include: tearing book page(s) off, removing the jacket cover, and hiding of books under their clothes and in pockets. Some recommendations were proffered to eradicate theft and mutilation in university libraries. Some of those recommendations are: those university libraries should provide photocopying service to enable the library users to photocopy books that are few in the library. The study also recommends that university management should provide adequate library materials to meet the information needs of their users*

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### INTRODUCTION

As the health professional may say "prevention is better than cure," The art of prevention is as old as human civilization. Since the invention of writings, mankind has been faced with problem of prevention. Document have been existing in one form or the other and it is natural for man to attempt to securing, managing and preventing them from deterioration. Edoka (2000) reported that the library emerged when the need arose to

safeguard, exploit and utilize records of civilization. Libraries have seen as one of the pillars of civilization. No nation can function effectively without the use of a library. According to Ajegbomogun (2004) the overall manner in which policies, programmes, procedures, or measures are deployed to mitigate risk and ensure access to library resource are not encouraging relatively, a security practice simply refers to the different types of actions, measures or practice adopted to



stop a crime. Libraries in Nigeria are performing a great lump of their activities traditionally. (Uzuegbu2011) observed that study crime against library collections, otherwise known as information resources, is on the increase in a number of Nigeria university libraries. It was observed that there was no significant relationship found between the security measures adopted and the rate of crime theft and mutilation of information resources in some Nigeria university libraries. (Uzuegbu, 2011). This paper is poised as publishing the security practice employed in some Nigeria university libraries. The university libraries under study are: Gombe state university [GSU]; Abubakar Tafawa Balewa Bauchi [ATBU] and Modibbo Adamu university of technology, Yola [MAUTECH]

#### **Statement of the Problem**

In many university libraries in Nigeria theft and mutilation has become order of the day, due to the lack of a good security network. Information resources in a developing country like Nigeria are built up over a long period of time at considerable expenses; yet libraries are left without any proper security measure. Libraries are concerned with the security of the materials they acquired and some of their material they acquired through gift and donation for achieving its aims. Loss of library materials is a recurring problem of libraries all over the world, but it seems to be more serious in academic libraries in Nigeria. University libraries are traditionally built to meet the needs of students, lectures and university communities through the provision of qualitative and adequate information resources and services. Security management for prevention of incessant thefts of information resources in university libraries in Nigeria is posing a great problem; especially in the area of book theft and mutilation. Poor security network contribute in either stealing or mutilating book/journal in the library. This leads to the loss of many valuable

materials in libraries. John (2009) reported that libraries had to content with some problems which are found to affect the entire quality of library service, facilities and information resources.

#### **Objectives of Study**

The objective of the study is to find possible ways or solutions to the problems of security management for prevention of incessant book thefts in the universities under study. Specifically the study is designed to:

1. Identify causes of book theft and mutilation of library materials;
2. Find out the means through which library materials are being stolen;
3. Identify the methods library adopt to prevent its information resources from the theft and mutilation;
4. Identify security measures that can help to prevent theft and mutilation

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Dean, (2014) stated that, access card technology has been used to safeguard records, access card can be used in conjunction with video surveillance to control and monitor large collections and equipment's (Dean, 2014). Access cards can be integrated as photo ID cards for library employees and can be used as temporary keys for library clientele to have access to restricted areas. The access system can also be used for monitoring employee time and attendance, security patrols of the property, and can limit access to sensitive areas in the library. Electronic access control system enhances safety and protects valuable library assets. Access control solution range from simple authorized access systems to advanced close circuit monitoring and exception reports delivered through secure internet connections. The most popular types of cards is the magnetic strip cards, which looks like a credit card and carries two or more tracks of information on the magnetic stripe, these can be used for access control and other services.



Antwi (1989) in a study of book theft conducted at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi, Nigeria, revealed that the problems faced by libraries are three-dimensional. The study and subsequent search showed that collections may be stolen by students, library staff, and unauthorized external users. This implies that any security measure put in place by an information center should apply to everyone including its members of staff. Considering the value, uniqueness and cost of some of the collection, information institutions need to seriously (re) consider security management responsibility. According to Maidabino (2010), library security management has to do with taking necessary measures to ensure that the materials available for use in the library are kept in good condition and prevented from being stolen. Security management in libraries can be conceptualized to mean the overall manner in which security policies, programs procedures, or measures are deployed to mitigate the risk and ensure access. Ugah (2007) observed that major security issues in libraries include theft and mutilation; vandalism; damages and disaster; over borrowing or delinquent borrowers; and purposefully displacing arrangement of materials. Security is a way of life. Systematic security measures to ensure the safety of records and archival materials against human and natural agents. Constant vigilance on part of library staff may help to secure library materials. According to Adamu (2006), "security refers to device designed to guard library materials against crime, accidents, disaster, fire and attacks" Aina(2004) is of the view that, library materials must be safe; hence security devices need to be provided by libraries to ensure that materials are not stolen or mutilated." Maidabino (2010) reported a high rate of book theft, mutilation and misplacement of books in Nigeria academic libraries. He suggested measures to reduce the problems which include tightening security at library

entrance and exit, expulsion of student involved in theft and mutilation, provision of multiple copies of heavily used texts, reducing the cost of photocopying, and periodic searching of students' hostels and staff. Aguolu (2000) observed that the best protection that a collection of books and non-book materials can have is a concrete building. From the perspective of Rajendra (2005), the "library security should be planned when building is constructed wherever possible, through architectural considerations which include the site design and building design.

Electronic security systems are technological devices that are used with the aid of electrical apparatus to secure library materials from theft and vandalism. Nancy (2016) wrote extensively on the use of electronic security to combat book theft and the experiences involved in their installation in the United States. Nancy (2016) stress that, adoption of video surveillance and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems for managing security challenge arising from theft and vandalism, video surveillance and closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems serve as a way to monitor vandal in the library. The system can also be used to monitor and record evidence on clientele and employee misconduct. There are two basic elements of electronic surveillance. Primarily, the device or 'trigger' that is fitted into each book- hardback, paperback or journals; cassettes, records, discs. This trigger is very discreet and when concealed within books are virtually undetectable. Secondly, the free standing sensing installed at the exit such as the metal detective door of the library also serves as means for curbing theft and mutilation. Books left on the shelf or on the reading tables are sensitized and remain so until a book to be borrowed by a patron is desensitized at the issue desk by the library staff and the patron then exits from the library. Except the book is checked out, the trigger always ring an alarm that alert the security personnel at the gate.



Khurshid, (2015) observed that, the used of radio frequency identification systems (RFID), as surveillance system for managing security challenge arising from theft and vandalism. Security measures in the libraries can be broadly considered as physical security and electronic security. Physical security measures consist of site and architectural design, regular stock checking, deployment of library security officer (LSO), security staff, written security policy, bag checking, extended library opening hours, keys control, window and door protection, display case protection and use of dummy security devices (Khurshid, 2015). However, electronic security systems for libraries cover access control, radio frequency identification systems (RFID), and electronic alarm systems, smoke detectors, flame detectors, security sensors, burglary protection, video surveillance, CCTV, biometric identification and database management programs can be used to control Vandalism in the library.

The used of electromagnetic security (EM) surveillance system for managing security challenge arising from theft and vandalism, electromagnetic security (EM) is another most-used library security measure worldwide in the protection of books and other media from vandal activities (Adam and Abdullahi, 2018). A libraries book collect is valuable. Using a surveillance system along with 3M/RFID security gates could help to prevent theft and criminal activities within the library. Surveillance cameras installed throughout the library helps to protect library from theft and vandal.

Nwamefor (1974) cited by Nwalo (2003) asserted that the following measures could help to reduce the rate of book thefts in the library, which include:

1. Constant supervision;
2. Searching users at the library exit;
3. Unannounced searching of students hostels;
4. Posting security personnel of integrity to the library;

5. Condemnation of theft through mass media;
6. Being vigilant against mutilation by library staff;
7. Gauzing of library windows should be gauzed to make it very difficult for books to be throw out. McComb (2004) stated that video surveillance and close-circuit television (CCTV) systems serve as a way to monitor and record security, deter crime, and ensure safety, The author suggests that libraries can use CCTV to identify visitors and employees, monitor work areas, deter theft, and ensure the security of the premises and other facilities. The system can also be used to monitor and record evidence on clientele and employee misconduct. In the same vein Ramana (2010) contributed that "closed circuit television (CCTV) uses in the libraries can enhance the ability to control the book theft and tearing off the pages from the books and magazines.

Library services can only be achieved through the availability of library collections. Nkiki and Yusuf (2008) observed that, information is an essential part of a nation's wealth and access to it is a basic human right. A university library houses a wide variety of information resources. Information is not only a national resources, but also a medium for social communication. Anunobi and Okoye (2008) also agree with the safety of the information resources. Consequently, different libraries have adopted varying security measures for their collections' safety. McComb (2004) writes that physical (non-electronic) security, electronic security and security policies/procedures are substantial methods for securing information resources of all kinds of libraries. Physical security includes architectural considerations, the use of personnel, and security hardware to prevent crimes against library collections. Electronic security system refers to the use of equipment which typically provides alarm



notification to the appropriate authority on entry control and site surveillance. Major elements of the electronic security system include burglary protection, collection security (hidden on materials) access control (system that directly "read" unique personal characteristics such as voice quality, hand geometry, and identify Card.) and video surveillance, particularly the CCTV system. Sensors (detectors) to detect an intrusion and alarms (to notify appropriate authorities) are the facilities that make this type of security electronic on the other hand, security policies and procedures include all created and implemented security policies, procedures, and plans for the library. Oder (2004) strongly maintains that security measures such as supervision, patrolling, and surveillance are lacking in libraries while keys to various collections halls are kept unsecured, if not in plain sight of the users.

In the definition of Maidabino (2010), mutilation is the act of destroying or removal of an essential part of library materials as to render it useless. This could be as a result of bending of corner of paper inserting pencil or biro into pages, further, of opening books back to back, tearing of relevant pages. Aliyu (2004) defined theft "as the total removal of library materials from the library without the normal procedures, either by the library users, library staff or both of them" Utah (2004) specifies mutilation and theft of library materials as "deliberate removal or attempted removal of library materials from the library without their being checked out" Also, successful unauthorized removal of library materials from the library, failure to return the materials to the library is also considered to be theft of library materials. Ifidon (2000) stated that "mutilation and theft in libraries is a menace that has persisted, and it is indeed a global problem, the worsening state of libraries in Nigeria

appears to have aggravated its intensity and the consequent negative impact."

Aina, (2013) opined that, the use of electronic resource management system to safeguard resources, is the advent of information and communication technology (ICT) now has made libraries to preserve their information resources through electronic method. Information on printed format can now be recorded in computer using compact disk (CD), diskette, flash drives and through digitization of library information resources (Aina, 2013). Internet services enable libraries not only acquire but also preserve in the storage media and are accessed through browsing, and downloading to protect the information resource from disaster. Aina (2013) further defined digitization as the conversion of traditional library information resources (books and papers) to electronic form using computers, scanners, and digital cameras to safeguard information resource from theft and vandal.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The survey research designs was adopted for this study. The research is subjected to four (4) university libraries in North East Nigerian, namely Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Library Bauchi, Gombe State University (GSU), Library Gombe, Modibbo Adamu University of Technology, (MAUTECH) Library Yola, and Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri (UNIMAID), Borno State. These libraries were chosen, because they possess a similar character in terms of their users. A random sample of 120 staff members of the university libraries participated in the study. Questionnaire was the main instrument, for data collection supplemented by the observation method. The questionnaire was administrated to librarians, library officers as well as the library assistances in the libraries.



**Table 1:** Percentage of returned Questionnaires

INSTITUTIONS	NO of questionnaires administrated	No of questionnaires Retrieved	Percentage of Returned Questionnaires
ATBU Bauchi	30	23	27.0%
MAUTECH Yola	30	20	23.5
Gombe state University	30	20	23.5
Unimaid Maiduguri	30	22	25.88
	120	85	

Table 1, shows that out of the four universities under study ATBU Bauchi has the highest number of retrieved questionnaire with (23) followed by

university of Maiduguri with (22) while MAUTECH and Gombe State university has (20) respectively

**Table 2:** Demographic Characteristics

GENDER	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Female	20	23.5%
Male	65	76.47%
Total	85	

Table 2, shows that majority of the respondents were male with (76.47%) while (23.5%) were females. This reveals

that there were more male staff than females in the libraries surveyed.

**Table 3:** Security challenges in academic libraries.

Security challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Non return of library materials	71	22.32%
Theft	60	19.52%
Cutting out illustration	43	13.43%
Tearing out pages	40	12.45%
Marketing/writing on text	39	12.23%
Borrowing books for family friend	35	11.23%
Removal of date due slip library labels	27	8%

Table 3, above shows that 71.32% of the respondent reported that non return of library materials was the major problem faced by the libraries, followed by book theft with 19.52%. However, non-return of the library materials constitute

serious problem in the libraries surveyed. This is quite true as over 18 overdue books were yet to be returned in unimaid alone. Users do not want to return library materials, even when overdue.

**Table 4:** Library materials most targeted

Library materials	Frequency	Percentage
Books	68	21.34%
Journals	35	10.45%
CD-Roms	50	15.36%
News paper	30	9.23%
Magazines	33	10.34%



Library materials	Frequency	Percentage
V C Ds	45	14.65%
D V Ds	36	11.43%
Cameras	6	1%
e-journals	16	5.32%

Table, shows that books ranked highest (21.34%) among items mutilated and stolen from libraries closely followed by CD-Roms (15.36), while other library materials such as VCDs (14.65%) Newspaper (9.23%) magazines (10, 34%) journals (10.45%) e-journals (5.32%) and cameras (1%). This confirms the conclusion of Omioniyi (2001) that computer hardware and electronic

equipment are increasingly becoming objects of theft in academic libraries. In (MAUTECH) absence of photocopy service and laxity of porters in checking users may be responsible for theft and mutilation. Through there are photocopying services in (ATBU), Gombe state university and (UNIMAID), erratic power supply is a major setback for effective services.

**Table 5:** Available control measure in the universities surveyed

Control measure	Frequency	Percentage
Secured windows	50	27.34%
Physical check and exit	46	21.45%
Human surveillance	38	20.35%
Electronic surveillance	-	-
Use of alarm system	-	-
Use of uniform man	27	14.65%
Use of CCTV	30	16.22%

In table 5. Respondent were asked to identify the types of control measure available in their libraries. However it reveals that the use of information communication technology (ICT) to safeguard library collection, are not adequately utilized as a results of poor power supply. The traditional pattern of securing library windows with nets, physical checks of users during exit and periodic human surveillance, is very much prevalent in libraries surveyed.

### CONCLUSION

The importance of information resources cannot be over-emphasized, man depends on library resources for knowledge and new ideas are projected through the use of library resources. The data collected in the research reveals the various security lapses and ways library loses its materials through theft and mutilation. It was discovered that security

system applied in universities libraries have not really effective, there is still much to be done in ensuring a well secured library and an opportunity for the future generation to share the knowledge of today. It was further discovered that other contributing factors observed include a limited number of copies of library materials, high cost of books and non-book materials and absence of photocopy machines in libraries. In this, Gojeh (1999) corroborated this finding when he said that "lost of library materials reduces the efficiency of libraries". Aguolu (2002) also stated that "high incidence of book-theft and mutilation gradually depletes information resources and reduces the librarian effectiveness" Therefore, there is need to preserve and maintain library information and materials in all cost.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provisions of photocopying services in the library to enable library users



- make quick photocopies for their need of library materials.
2. The university library should provide adequate library materials to meet the information needs of the users.
  3. The library should provide stable and uninterrupted power supply in order to maintain the electronic security network and other ICT equipment.
  4. Using electronics books in the library, especially for high-demand, latest-edition text: book theft will be reduce by transferring a 'high risk' physical item into an electronic version that cannot be illegally remove from the premises.
  5. The library security personnel should be placed in strategic position in the library so that strict compliance to the library rules and regulations would be ensured among the library users.
  6. Male and female security personnel should be employed to ensure that scrupulous search takes place for both male and female students at the exits of the library.
  7. Departmental libraries should be established in the university to reduce the pressure on the main library; more books should be made available for the users in the process
  8. More closed circuit television (CCTV) system should be provided so as to minimize the menace of book theft and mutilation

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